



Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth &amp; Families

## Performance Indicator Findings for Youth Outreach and Tracking Programs

This Rhode Island Data Analytic Center Research Brief summarizes findings of selected performance indicators for eight outreach and tracking programs funded by the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) for the Fiscal Year 2009 (FY09). Outreach and tracking programs are designed to provide community-based outreach services to males and females, ages 9-21. Services include: individual, group, and/or family counseling; recreational activities; culturally enriching experiences; crisis response services; and linkages to educational, vocational, and/or rehabilitation services as necessary. Analyses examined the individual and family characteristics, presenting problems, and discharge criteria for children and youth served by DCYF outreach and tracking programs.

### Demographic Characteristics

**A total of 1,046 children and youth were served in outreach and tracking programs, of which 692 (66%) were newly admitted within the fiscal year.** Of the total sample, proportionately more males (60%) were served, over one-half (92%) were 12-18 years old, and over three-fourths were Caucasian (41%), Hispanic (23%), or African American (20%). These demographic characteristics are detailed in Table 1. Additionally, English was the primary language spoken at home for the great majority of children and youth served (82%), with Spanish as the next most common (12%).

**At admission, 18% of youth age 16 and over were employed (n=213) and 85% were enrolled in school (n=984).** These numbers are higher because duplicate records are possibly included as aggregate data is collected quarterly.

**The majority of children and youth for whom data was reported received passing grades in school.** Math, English, and Reading grades were reported for 31%, 31%, and 22% of children and youth served. Of this group, approximately 53% to 57% received a grade of "C" or better in Math, English, or Reading during the period they were enrolled in outreach and tracking programs.

### Referral Source

**The most common referral source was DCYF Family Services Division (42%), followed by DCYF/CANTS (14%), DCYF Juvenile Corrections Probation (11%), and DCYF Juvenile Corrections-Rhode Island Training School (RITS; 10%).** Self-Referral, Internal Agency Referral, and Court/Family Court each provided 4-6 percent of referrals. Law Enforcement provided 2 percent of referrals and the remaining referral sources each provided one percent or fewer referrals and included Court Diversionary, DCYF/Child Protective Screening Unit, Hospital/Clinic/Physician-Psychiatric, School, Social Service Agency, other reasons than those listed, Mental Health Agency, Residential Program, and Truancy Court/Officers. Overall referral patterns were comparable from FY08 to FY09.

### Mental Health Needs

**Thirty-nine percent of the children and youth served had identified needs for mental health services.** Of those in need, the majority (70%) were reported as receiving mental health services, while 32% had additional unmet mental health needs. The most common barrier for receiving mental health services was non-compliant child/youth (45%) and non-compliant parent (15%).

**Data for FY08 and FY09 was generally comparable** with the exception of a slight decrease in child non-compliance (49% vs. 45%) and reasons other than those listed (10% vs. 7%).

Variable		n	%
Gender	Male	626	60
	Female	420	40
Age	0-5 years	7	1
	6-11 years	55	5
	12-15 years	498	48
	16-18 years	460	44
	19+ years	26	2
Race/ Ethnicity	Caucasian	434	41
	African American	205	20
	Hispanic	242	23
	Asian/Pacific Islander	29	3
	Biracial	50	5
	American Indian/ Alaskan Native	6	1
	Unknown/Other	80	8

## Performance Indicator Findings for Youth Outreach and Tracking Programs

### Child and Family Presenting Problems

**The most prevalent presenting problems identified among children and youth entering outreach and tracking programs were school problems or issues (59%), behavioral problems (39%), out of parental control (31%), anger/aggression (29%), family violence or stress (29%), and criminal/illegal activity (27%) as depicted in Table 2.** Additional presenting problems not included in the table are sexual abuse (2%), developmental delay (2%), developmental problem/issue (2%), health problem/disability (2%), prenatal drug exposure (2%), fire setting (1%), and language/speech disorder (1%). Comparisons of FY08 to FY09 indicate that there were slight increases in reports of family violence or stress (21% vs. 29%) and behavioral problems (33% vs. 39%) for those entering outreach and tracking programs in FY09.

**The highest percentages of family presenting problems included school problems/issues (46%), family stress (45%), parenting problems (37%), behavioral problems (37%), and financial problems or unemployment (28%).** Overall, FY08 is comparable to FY09 with the exception that there were increases in the percentage of families who reported recreational needs (7% vs. 15%), criminal involvement (12% to 18%), and transportation needs (5% to 11%).

### Discharge Reasons and Characteristics

**Sixty-two percent (n=650) of the total number of children and youth served were discharged the same year.** The primary reason for discharge given by programs was that goals were accomplished (51%), followed by other reasons than those listed (20%). Eight percent of children and youth were discharged due to court order, and seven percent were discharged for being adjudicated/re-offending. The remaining discharge reasons each provided four percent or fewer referrals and included Refused Services, Moved Out of State/Area, Left Without Notice/AMA/AWOL, Child Ages Out of Program, and 5/10 Days Notice.

**The primary placement to which children and youth were discharged was to their home with a parent or guardian (66%), followed by discharge to the RITS (11%).** Six percent were discharged to a group home and five percent to residential placement. DCYF foster care, the home of relatives, shelters, places other than those listed, psychiatric hospitalization, supervised independent living, emancipation/adoption, family court, job corps, more intensive programs, mental health services, and specialized foster care each comprised 2% or fewer of findings. Overall, the discharge dispositions for FY08 and FY09 were comparable with the exception that children and youth were discharged less frequently to a parent or guardian (72% vs. 66%).

Table 2. Child and Youth Presenting Problems in FY09 (N=692)

Presenting Problem	n	%
School Problems/Issue	407	59
Behavioral Problems	270	39
Out of Parental Control	213	31
Anger/Aggression	199	29
Family Violence/Stress	198	29
Criminal/Illegal Activity	186	27
Relationship Problem/Issue	132	19
Delinquency	98	14
Hyperactivity/Attention Deficit	97	14
Depression/Withdrawal	92	13
Alcohol/Drug Use/Abuse	89	13
Violent Behavior	84	12
Anxiety	76	11
Mental Health Problem/Other	66	10
Death/Absence of Caregiver	53	8
Neglect	53	8
Grief and Loss	45	7
Other	44	6
Abandonment	43	6
Abuse-Physical	40	6
Abuse-Emotional	33	5
Sexual Problem/Issue	19	3
Suicide Attempt/Threat	19	3
Self-Injurious Act/Threat	18	3

*Note: Programs may select more than one problem per person. As a result, percents do not equal 100. Data was collected for new admissions only (n=692).*

### Summary of Major Findings

- There were 1,046 children and youth served in outreach and tracking programs in FY09, of which 692 (66%) were newly admitted and 650 (62%) were discharged within the fiscal year.
- Proportionately more children and youth served were male (60%), Caucasian (41%), between the ages of 12 and 18 years (92%), and presented with needs for mental health services (39%).
- The most common presenting problems for children and youth entering services were: school problems/issues (59%), behavioral problems (39%), and out of parental control (31%); the most common family presenting problems were: school problems/issues (46%), family stress (45%), parenting problems (37%), behavioral problems (37%), and financial problems or unemployment (28%).
- The majority of children and youth served (62%) were discharged from services within the same year, and most of these (66%) to a parent or guardian in the home.